Report of the Expert Committee on sales tax (Tripathi Committee) for replacement of sales tax by additional excise duty on some selected commodities was considered in the Conference of Chief Ministers held on 2-11-1983. Several Chief Ministers indicated their acceptance of the scheme suggested by Tripathi Committee in principale. Some of the Chief Ministers, however, indicated that they were not in a position to accept the scheme recommended by Tripathi Committee. The Chief Ministers resolved that efforts should be continued to bring about consensus among the State Governments on these issues. As sales tax is mainly a State subject of taxation, any reform in the sales tax system can be undertaken only in consultation with and the cooperation of the States. Efforts made so far have not resulted in reaching a consensus.

Demand for Nationalisation of Jute Industry

249. SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that an all-party delegation from West Bengal, led by the Minister for Commerce and Industries of West Bengal Government had called on him recently and demanded nationalisaion of the jute industry.

(b) if so, what were the main demands; and

(c) what action is being taken by Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) In the Memorandum submitted on 27-6-1986, it has been *inter-alia* demanded that Government should *nationalise the jute industry, introduce* monopoly procurement, of raw jute, canalise all jute exports and ensure fair and remunerative price of jute to growers.

(c) A Statement is enclosed.(*See below*)

Nationalisation of jute industry would not resolve the problems in jute industry. Instead Government have been taking various measures to deal with each of the various aspects of the problems in jute industry. The measures taken include:

(1) Imposition of excise duty on HDPE|PP tapes and marginal increase of import duty on granules in the present union budget;

(2) Persuading other Departments to encourage use of more jute bags instead of synthetic substitues for packing fertilizers etc. and compulsory use of 100 per cent new jute bags by cement industry:

(3) Providing higher cash compensatory support for export of jute goods;

(4) Introducing a scheme of buffer stocking of raw jute so as to ensure availability of jute to mills at *reasonable prices;*

(5) Involving STC in assisting export of Carpet Backing Cloth by forming STC—Jute Industry Consortium on 50:50 loss sharing basis;

(6) Constituting a new Jute Manufactures Development Council to give boost to R & D efforts and export promotion;

(7) Announcement of the minimum statutory price of raw jute on the basis of the recommendations of the Commission of Agricultural Cost and Prices (CACP) and the continuance of price support operations for protecting the interests of growers.

Visit by U.S. military personnel to the Pak-occupied areas of Kashmir

250. SHRI RAM NARESH KUSHAWAHA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the visit by US military personnel to the